



Inclusive education: Challenges and opportunities of public elementary school teachers

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ABSTRACT

This qualitative phenomenological study explored the lived experiences of public elementary school teachers in the Banna District, Ilocos Norte, in implementing inclusive education. While inclusive education is recognized as a key strategy for ensuring that every child has access to meaningful learning, teachers often face realities that go beyond policy expectations. Guided by open-ended interviews and thematic analysis, the study sought to understand how teachers navigate the challenges and opportunities of inclusive classrooms. Findings revealed persistent barriers such as classroom management in diverse settings, limited learning materials, and physical space constraints. Yet, teachers also reported professional growth, shifts toward learner-centered approaches, and the cultivation of more compassionate, inclusive learning environments. Their voices highlight both resilience and the urgent need for institutional support. The study concludes that inclusive education carries transformative potential, but its success relies on providing teachers with sufficient resources, ongoing training, and recognition of their efforts. Strengthening policies and fostering a shared responsibility across the education sector are recommended to ensure that inclusive education is not just a mandate but a lived reality for every learner.

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Introduction

Inclusive education has emerged as a global imperative in recent years, driven by international conventions, national policies, and grassroots advocacy movements that seek to uphold the rights and well-being of learners with disabilities and other marginalized groups (UNESCO, 2009). In the Philippines, the Department of Education (DepEd) strongly promotes inclusive education to provide equitable learning opportunities to all learners, including those with disabilities, marginalized communities, and individuals from diverse cultural backgrounds. The implementation of inclusive education in the country is consistent with international education goals and domestic mandates such as the Enhanced Basic Education Act or Republic Act No. 10533. This framework affirms the government's commitment to providing accessible, high-quality, equitable, and culturally relevant primary education for all Filipino learners. Through inclusive education, learners with special needs are acceptable to

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participate in general education classrooms, allowing for social integration and equal academic development.

Teacher preparedness plays a vital role in the effective implementation of inclusive education. Several studies have shown that many public elementary school teachers in the Philippines feel inadequately trained to address the diverse needs of learners with disabilities and other special educational needs (Javier, 2023). The lack of pre-service and in-service training on inclusive practices contributes to teachers' limited understanding of differentiated instruction, individualized education plans (IEPs), and behavior management strategies (Onyishi & Sefotho, 2023). This gap in professional development often results in low teacher confidence and resistance toward inclusive teaching approaches. Despite existing Department of Education initiatives, such as the Basic Education Learning Continuity Plan and capacity-building seminars, access to consistent and quality training remains uneven across regions (DepEd, 2020). Consequently, the success of inclusive education largely depends on how well-equipped and supported teachers are in managing inclusive classrooms.

The United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization, on the other hand, defines inclusive education as integrating learners with special needs into mainstream classrooms and fostering environments where diversity is valued and all learners can thrive (UNESCO, 2017). This allows every child to learn regardless of their additional needs and provides resources and support tailored to them (Arias, C. R., et al., 2023). As a result, this approach aligns with the broader global commitment to equity and inclusivity in education.

Certain schools across the Philippines have already established inclusive education models, serving as best-practice examples. However, the broader application of inclusive education remains complex. While DepEd has instituted policies and teacher training programs to support inclusion, the day-to-day realities in classrooms present significant challenges. Teachers in public elementary schools, in particular, face increased responsibilities in addressing the varied needs of learners. Issues such as inadequate training, lack of instructional resources, student behavioral challenges, and limited institutional support have hindered the full realization of inclusive practices. Despite support from policies and legislation, many regular schools with an inclusive orientation continue to encounter obstacles (Allam & Martin, 2021). These barriers not only affect student learning but also contribute to teacher stress and burnout.

Furthermore, research has shown that teachers experience both positive and negative outcomes when working in inclusive environments (Mangope, B., & Mukhopadhyay, S., 2015). These experiences greatly influence their attitudes toward inclusivity. Other researchers emphasized that supporting both general and special education teachers can promote social transformation and improve inclusive outcomes. Additionally, maintaining a positive mindset and professional resilience helps teachers navigate the complexities of inclusive education. Despite the presence of numerous policies and programs, no single model can address all the challenges of inclusion. Thus, further research is essential to identify effective strategies, strengthen teacher support, and develop sustainable, inclusive practices. In the Philippine context, existing studies have explored teacher support systems, challenges, benefits,

and future possibilities. However, there is still a need for deeper exploration of teachers' lived experiences.

Hence, with inclusive education as one of the priorities of the Department of Education to achieve the goals of Education for All (EFA), the elementary public schools have been catering to the needs of children with special needs. However, to improve and strengthen the implementation of inclusive education in this part of the nation, there is a need to determine the challenges observed and opportunities experienced by the teachers who serve as the main implementers of such an approach. It is along with this premise that this study was conceived. This way, policy recommendations and improved plans for implementing inclusive education can be made to ensure that schools, especially the public elementary schools, are responsive to the needs of children with special needs, for they have equal access to quality education for all.

Review of related literature

Inclusive education is a global commitment that aims to ensure all learners, regardless of their abilities or backgrounds, have access to quality education within mainstream schools. The Salamanca Statement (UNESCO, 1994) laid the foundation for this movement, asserting that schools should accommodate all children regardless of physical, intellectual, social, emotional, linguistic, or other conditions. In the Philippines, inclusive education is supported by national laws such as the Enhanced Basic Education Act of 2013 (Republic Act No. 10533) and the Inclusive Education Act of 2022 (Republic Act No. 11650), which mandate educational institutions to make learning accessible and appropriate for all learners, especially those with disabilities. While the principles of inclusive education have been widely endorsed, implementing inclusive practices in different contexts remains a complex and multifaceted endeavor. This review situates the study within the broader context of implementing inclusive education, specifically examining the challenges and opportunities of public elementary teachers encounter in the Philippines.

Inclusive education in the Philippine context

The Philippine Department of Education (DepEd) promotes inclusive education through policies such as DepEd Order No. 72, s. 2009, which defines inclusive education not only as the inclusion of children with disabilities in regular classrooms, but also as a commitment to provide equitable learning opportunities for all learners. This includes children with diverse abilities and needs, such as those with physical, sensory, or intellectual disabilities, learners with developmental or behavioral challenges, children from indigenous and linguistic minority groups, gifted learners, and those from disadvantaged socio-economic backgrounds. In essence, inclusive education in the Philippine context goes beyond disability; it is about ensuring that every child, regardless of circumstance, is welcomed, valued, and supported in the school community.

This commitment was further strengthened through DepEd Order No. 44, s. 2021, which issued the Policy Guidelines on the Provision of Educational Programs and Services for Learners with Disabilities in the K to 12 Basic Education Program. While DO 72 provided the philosophical foundation of inclusion, DepEd Order No. 44 outlined how programs and services should be delivered, ensuring that

learners with disabilities are not left behind but are fully integrated into the mainstream education system with appropriate support. Together, these policies emphasize that inclusive education is both a guiding principle and a concrete responsibility within the Philippine school system.

Inclusive education in the Philippines is implemented primarily in public elementary schools, serving as a vehicle to promote equity and social justice. However, several studies indicate that the implementation is still in its early developmental stages and faces numerous systemic barriers. Many elementary schools struggle to create environments that are both inclusive and conducive to learning due to limitations in teacher training, infrastructure, and educational materials.

According to Sito, L.R. (2020), inclusive education in the Philippines has made progress in policy and advocacy, but teacher preparedness remains a crucial gap. Most elementary public-school teachers express limited confidence in managing inclusive classrooms, particularly in handling diverse learning needs and behavioral issues. This underscores the importance of comprehensive professional development and institutional support.

Challenges in inclusive elementary education

One major challenge is limited teacher preparedness. Research has shown that many teachers in public elementary schools have not received formal training on inclusive practices, making it difficult for them to adapt instruction for students with special educational needs (Jardinez & Natividad, 2022). This lack of preparedness leads to stress, burnout, and feelings of incompetence among teachers.

Another challenge is the lack of instructional and physical resources. West, J., & Meier, C. (2020), found that classrooms are often overcrowded and under-equipped, making it difficult to implement individualized instruction or accommodate students with mobility or sensory impairments. Teaching materials such as visual aids, assistive technologies, and differentiated learning tools are rarely available in sufficient quantity.

Classroom management also becomes more complex in inclusive settings. Brown, C.S. (2019) noted that teachers find it difficult to maintain discipline and ensure engagement when faced with a wide range of student abilities, especially in large class sizes with little to no teacher aides or support personnel.

Beyond these structural barriers, **attitudinal barriers persist**, both among educators and in the wider school community. Studies from recent years highlight that teacher attitudes play a crucial role in the success or failure of inclusive education. For instance, Kyamko, V. F. et al., (2024) reported that some teachers still perceive inclusion as an additional burden due to the extra time and energy required to meet diverse needs. Similarly, Macapaz et al. (2024) found that while teachers in Cebu held moderately positive attitudes toward inclusive education, many also experienced high emotional exhaustion and depersonalization, suggesting that fatigue and stress can overshadow even supportive mindsets. In another Philippine study, Alcosero, A. et al., (2023) emphasized that subtle forms of resistance, such as low expectations of learners with disabilities or reluctance to adjust teaching strategies, remain evident in some schools.

On a global scale, these patterns are echoed. Sharma and Sokal (2020) argued that teachers' attitudes toward inclusion are significantly shaped by their confidence, training, and access to resources. Their study revealed that without adequate preparation, teachers may feel overwhelmed and resistant, regardless of whether they support the principle of inclusion. Likewise, Boyle, C. et al., (2020) underscored that inclusive education requires not just structural reforms but also a cultural shift in how teachers perceive and value learner diversity.

Taken together, these findings affirm that inclusion is not hindered only by lack of training or resources but also by **deep-seated beliefs and perceptions**. Some teachers continue to see inclusion as an added responsibility rather than an opportunity to enrich the learning environment. As Sito (2020) stressed, the challenge is not merely equipping classrooms but also nurturing empathy, openness, and confidence among teachers. Without addressing these attitudinal barriers, inclusive education risks being viewed as a policy mandate rather than a genuine practice that transforms classrooms into spaces where every learner feels valued.

Opportunities presented by inclusive education

Despite the challenges, inclusive education offers significant opportunities for teachers and learners alike. One of the primary opportunities lies in professional growth. Teachers who embrace inclusive practices report becoming more reflective, patient, and innovative in their teaching. Inclusive classrooms push educators to explore new methods such as Universal Design for Learning (UDL), differentiated instruction, and collaborative teaching.

Inclusive education also promotes stronger partnerships between schools, families, and communities. Bartolome, M., et al., (2017) emphasized that when teachers, parents, and local stakeholders work together, they are more likely to develop sustainable support systems that benefit all learners. Moreover, inclusive classrooms nurture empathy, cooperation, and social awareness among students. When children with diverse abilities learn together, it fosters a more tolerant and compassionate school culture, preparing all students to thrive in a diverse society (Tampubolon, M., et al., 2024)

Finally, inclusive education catalyzes system-wide improvement. When schools adapt their practices to accommodate students with special needs, they often find that these improvements benefit all learners. Better instructional materials, more engaging pedagogy, and inclusive assessment strategies enhance the overall quality of education Sito, L.R. (2020).

State of the problem

This study explored the lived experiences of elementary teachers within the public schools in Banna, Ilocos Norte, specifically focusing on the challenges and opportunities they faced in the implementation of DepEd's Inclusive Education.

Specifically, the study answered the following research questions:

- 1. What are the challenges faced by public elementary school teachers in implementing inclusive education?**

2. What opportunities do teachers encounter in inclusive classroom settings?

Research methodology

Research design

This study employed a qualitative phenomenological research design that focuses on understanding the lived experiences of public elementary teachers. This approach is appropriate for gaining in-depth insights into the challenges and opportunities in an inclusive education setting.

Locale of the study

The study was conducted in the different public elementary schools in the municipality of Banna, Ilocos Norte. These schools were chosen due to their active engagement in implementing inclusive education initiatives.

Population and sampling

The participants of this study were public elementary school teachers in Banna who had experience in handling diverse learners, including those with special educational needs. Purposive sampling was used to select 10–15 participants who are knowledgeable and experienced in the context of inclusive education. The sample size was deliberately kept small to facilitate an in-depth phenomenological analysis of both individual and collective experiences of the participants.

Data gathering instrument

This study used an online interview questionnaire designed to elicit detailed responses about the challenges and opportunities of public elementary school teachers in the implementation of inclusive education. The questionnaire consisted of open-ended questions that allowed participants to share their narratives and insights. The questions were structured to cover key areas such as classroom management, teaching resources, classroom set-up, strategies and approaches, positive changes, and how inclusion helped professionally.

Data gathering procedure

The data collection was carried out through a Google Form online questionnaire, which allowed teachers to respond at their convenience and was analyzed using thematic analysis. This approach involved systematically identifying, analyzing, and reporting patterns within the qualitative data. The responses from the participants were thoroughly reviewed to become familiar with the content. Initial codes were generated by highlighting significant phrases and concepts related to the challenges and opportunities of public elementary schools in the implementation of inclusive education. These codes were organized into an overarching theme that captured the essence of the participants' lived experiences. Themes were reviewed and refined to ensure they accurately represented the data, allowing for a comprehensive understanding of the elementary teachers' challenges they experienced and opportunities encountered through inclusive education. This process facilitated the extraction of meaningful insights and contributed to the overall phenomenological analysis of the study.

Ethical considerations

Ethical considerations were rigorously applied throughout the research process to safeguard the rights and well-being of the participants, ensuring that all procedures adhered to ethical standards and guidelines. All participants provided informed consent before participating in the study. The research ensured confidentiality and the right to withdraw from the study at any time. Data were anonymized and securely stored, with only the researcher having access to the raw data.

Results and discussion

The findings of this study illuminate the multifaceted realities experienced by public elementary school teachers in the Banna District as they work to implement inclusive education. Their testimonies reveal both persistent struggles, such as classroom management, inadequate resources, and space limitations, and hopeful opportunities, including professional growth, learner transformation, and evolved teaching practices. These lived experiences call not only for recognition but for systemic reforms that make inclusive education viable, meaningful, and sustainable in rural Philippine contexts.

Table 1. Challenges of elementary public-school teachers in the implementation of inclusive education

Themes	Categories	F
Theme 1: Classroom management in diverse settings	Emotional and behavioral demands	10
	Differentiated strategies	8
	Peer support and collaboration	6
Theme 2: Resource limitations	Lack of learning materials	8
	Emotional strain and frustration	7
	Improvisation and personal sacrifice	8
Theme 3: Physical constraints in the classroom environment	Lack of sensory-safe spaces	8
	Overcrowded layouts	4
	Positive impact of proper set-up	8

I. Challenges in implementing inclusive education

Theme 1: Classroom management in diverse settings

This theme explores teachers' emotional and instructional demands while managing learners with varied abilities. Three categories emerged: Emotional and Behavioral Demands, Differentiated Strategies, and Peer Support and Collaboration. Teachers shared how their patience, creativity, and flexibility were tested daily in inclusive classrooms. These classroom management practices are further illustrated by the following statements from the participants:

“In an inclusive setting, I make sure to set routines so my students know what to expect. I use visual cues for children with autism and offer praise for small achievements. I also pair students who can help each other as it promotes cooperation and reduces behavioral issues.” (P1)

“There are days when one child needs constant redirection while another is triggered by noise. I’ve learned to stay calm and patient, and I use gentle voice prompts and calming techniques. Still, it’s exhausting without extra help in the classroom.” (P2)

“Classroom management in an inclusive setting needs a diverse approach. I use three phases of activities, easy, average, and difficult, to support learners at different levels.” (P3)

These accounts reinforce that inclusive classroom management involves more than discipline it demands trust-building, emotional intelligence, and inclusive structures. Teachers often wear multiple hats, facilitator, counselor, and mediator, particularly in Philippine public schools where class sizes are large and support staff are scarce (Department of Education [DepEd], 2020). Their perseverance reflects a deep commitment to ensuring every learner feels valued and understood.

Theme 2: Resource limitations

This theme highlights the material and emotional toll of teaching inclusively with limited support. Key categories identified were Lack of Learning Materials, Emotional Strain and Frustration, and Improvisation and Personal Sacrifice. Teachers revealed how they frequently use personal funds and ingenuity to create learning opportunities. The following statements from participants reflect these emotional and professional challenges:

“We don’t have assistive devices or special learning materials, so I end up printing worksheets from my pocket or making flashcards from cardboard and markers.” (P3)

“It affects my efficiency to teach because of the lack of materials. I can’t always apply the most suitable approach. I end up improvising, just to make things work.” (P4)

“It’s draining at times. I want to do more for my learners, especially those with special needs, but without enough resources, I feel like I’m always falling short.” (P6)

These lived experiences mirror the findings of Balading, J. et al., (2022), who reported that public school teachers often finance special education materials themselves. Similarly, Allam and Martin (2021) emphasized that inclusive education requires not only teacher training but also the availability of learning resources, an area still lacking in the Philippine context.

According to DepEd (2023), inclusive education is a policy priority, yet resource distribution remains uneven, particularly in remote or underserved areas. As a result, teachers are left to create their teaching aids from recycled or makeshift materials, not by choice, but by necessity. While this reflects their dedication and ingenuity, it also raises important questions about equity and systemic support.

Furthermore, As Brown, C. S. (2019) noted, *“Teachers’ resourcefulness often keeps inclusion afloat, but this model is unsustainable and emotionally taxing.”* Ultimately, while the passion and resilience of Filipino teachers shine through, the burden of inclusive education should not rest on their shoulders alone. Without adequate and equitable resource support, the promise of inclusion remains a struggle of individual sacrifice rather than a shared, systemic commitment.

Theme 3: Physical constraints in the classroom environment

This theme addresses the structural barriers to inclusion, particularly in supporting learners with autism and sensory needs. Teachers discussed three interrelated categories Lack of Sensory-Safe Spaces, Overcrowded Layouts, and Positive Impact of Proper Set-Up. Many teachers emphasized how traditional classroom layouts do not support the sensory and emotional needs of children with special needs, particularly those on the autism spectrum. The following statements by the participants illustrate these emotional challenges:

“There’s no quiet space for children who need sensory breaks. When things get too noisy or overwhelming, some of my pupils with autism tend to cry or shut down. But the classroom is too small I can’t provide a space where they can calm themselves.” (P2)

“It brings a lot of positivity. If my classroom is set up right, then there’s a big chance I can apply strategies that give students more comfort and space to learn.” (P5)

“My student with autism would often cover his ears and rock back and forth when it got too noisy. I wanted to give him a space with soft pillows or quiet toys, but we barely have space for chairs and tables.” (P7)

These experiences affirm findings by Beltran, K.A. et al. (2025), who noted that most public schools lack the structural features needed for inclusive education, such as sensory zones or adaptive seating. While other studies suggest that even simple accommodations can make a big difference, teachers here are left without the space or resources to apply them. The lack of physical accommodation doesn’t just affect students; it also limits what teachers can do. Without room to adjust the environment, they often rely on reactive strategies that increase stress for both teacher and child. Thus, these findings highlight the urgent need to consider inclusive design in school infrastructure. Classrooms should be built not just for the majority, but for the diversity of learners they serve, especially those who need physical and sensory support to thrive.

Table 2. Opportunities for elementary public school teachers in the implementation of inclusive education

Themes	Categories	F
Theme 1: Observed positive changes in the teaching-learning process	Improved peer relationships	5
	Classroom unity and inclusion	3
	Empathy and social skills.	2
Theme 2: Professional growth	Reflective practice	6
	Motivation to learn and grow	9
	Fulfillment from small successes.	8
Theme 3: Teaching approaches	Contextualized teaching	8
	Simplified and scaffolded instruction	4
	Inclusive instruction for all	8

II. Opportunities in implementing inclusive education

Theme 1: Observed positive changes in the teaching-learning process

This theme captures the positive emotional impact and behavioral shifts observed by teachers as a result of implementing inclusive education. Despite the challenges, teachers reported meaningful transformations in classroom dynamics. The categories under this theme include Improved Peer Relationships, Classroom Unity and Inclusion, and Empathy and Social Skills. Teachers shared stories of how learners developed stronger connections, empathy, and a sense of shared responsibility. These observed positive changes are further illustrated by the following statements from the participants:

“I noticed that my pupils became more accepting. They don’t laugh when a classmate struggles they help instead. It feels like a family inside the classroom now.” (P1)

“It allows learners with difficulties to feel part of the group. They’re no longer outsiders. They belong not just in the classroom, but in the school community.” (P3)

“Before, some of my learners were hesitant to interact with classmates who had learning difficulties. But now, they’re more open and understanding. I see them offering help, sharing materials, or simply sitting beside those who need company.” (P5)

These insights correspond with the findings of Reicher, H. (2009), who demonstrated that inclusive classrooms enhance social-emotional learning, helping students cultivate attributes like compassion, patience, and a greater understanding of one another. The emotional tone displayed in teachers' feedback indicated that inclusion promotes not only academic success but also significant interpersonal

development. This theme also supports the overarching objectives of Education for All (EFA), which emphasizes inclusive education as a cornerstone for fostering social cohesion and peace. When diversity is celebrated and kindness is prioritized, the classroom transforms from merely a learning environment into a secure space where every child feels appreciated.

Theme 2: Professional growth

This theme highlights how inclusive education has fostered significant personal and professional development among educators. The key categories were Reflective Practice, Motivation to Learn and Grow, and Fulfillment from Small Successes. These statements of personal and professional growth are further demonstrated by the following remarks from the participants:

“Inclusive education made me a better teacher. I’ve learned how to adjust, how to plan differently, and how to reflect more on what works. I no longer just deliver lessons I build connections.” (P4)

“It challenged me a lot, but it also gave me a reason to explore more and pursue my master’s degree. I want to grow not just for myself, but for my learners.” (P8)

“When my student with speech delay said ‘Thank you, Ma’am’ for the first time, I cried. It wasn’t perfect but to me, it was everything.” (P6)

These reflections align with the observations made by Macabenta, J.M., et al., (2023) who found that inclusive environments enhance teachers’ reflective practices and resilience. In the Philippines, where inclusive education is still in progress, this transition is crucial. As noted by Javier, M. (2023), educators are starting to shift from inflexible teaching methods to more adaptive, student-focused strategies.

Despite facing difficulties, teachers conveyed a deep sense of satisfaction from witnessing their students' development, often in subtle yet significant ways. Such experiences remind them that teaching extends beyond delivering lessons; it involves fostering an environment where every child feels acknowledged, appreciated, and capable.

Theme 3: Teaching approaches

This theme highlights how inclusive education has reshaped the way teachers approach instruction. The major categories identified were Contextualized Teaching, Simplified and Scaffolded Instruction, and Inclusive Instruction for All. These teaching approaches are further illustrated by the following statements from the participants:

“The so-called contextualization, when you give learners the context they know and the context where they live in makes lessons come alive for them.” (P2)

“I started simplifying tasks without watering them down. I use charts, break things into smaller steps, and give instructions one at a time. Even my other students respond better.” (P7)

Teachers found that using visuals, breaking down tasks, and creating opportunities for peer support didn't just benefit learners with disabilities, but they also helped the entire class stay engaged and succeed.

In a system where large class sizes and limited materials are everyday challenges, teachers embraced flexible teaching with empathy and resourcefulness. As stated, *"Inclusion isn't about perfect materials—it's about knowing your learners and teaching with heart."* (P9). This theme affirms that inclusive teaching is not just a response to diversity; it is a pathway to more meaningful, compassionate, and effective education for all.

Conclusion

This research investigated the experiences of public elementary school teachers in Banna District, Ilocos Norte, as they navigate the realities of implementing inclusive education. Through their narratives, a clear picture emerged, one that highlights both the ongoing challenges and the quiet successes that characterize inclusive teaching in Philippine public schools. Teachers openly discussed the burden they bear: managing a diverse range of learners in overcrowded classrooms, lacking assistive tools and instructional materials, and working within rigid physical environments that are not conducive to inclusion. These challenges, exacerbated by insufficient systemic support, often result in exhaustion, frustration, and feelings of being overwhelmed.

However, in the face of these obstacles, what prominently shines through is not despair, but commitment. The study revealed the transformative power of inclusive education. Teachers experienced personal growth, becoming more reflective, patient, and innovative in their teaching methods. They learned to educate not just on subject matter, but also on building human connections. Their classrooms evolved into environments of empathy, adaptability, and development for both students and teachers alike.

As this research supports, inclusive education transcends mere policy or placement. It embodies a daily commitment to the belief that every child deserves to be recognized, supported, and taught in ways that acknowledge their unique differences. While the current inadequacies in training, resources, and classroom design need urgent attention, it is equally crucial to acknowledge the resilience and creativity of the teachers who make inclusion a reality, often with minimal resources.

The findings of this study remind us that inclusive education is not just a written mandate; it is lived every single day by teachers who try, often against the odds, to make sure no child is left behind. And because of this, the implications for policy are deeply human. Teachers need more than encouragement; they need real, tangible support. This means classrooms that are not bursting at the seams, learning spaces that are accessible to all, and teaching materials that actually match the diverse needs of their students. It means training that is continuous and practical, not just one-off seminars that fade from memory once teachers return to their classrooms.

Perhaps most importantly, the findings remind us that inclusion cannot be carried by teachers alone. Policies should build systems where parents, local communities, and support services stand alongside

teachers, sharing the responsibility of raising children with diverse needs. When teachers are heard, supported, and empowered, their commitment can truly blossom into change.

In the end, the message is simple but powerful: if inclusive education is to work, policies must be grounded in the voices of teachers who live its realities every day. Their stories tell us that inclusion is not just about laws or directives it is about creating schools where every child feels seen and valued. For this to happen, policies must go beyond compliance and invest in teachers, not just as implementers of inclusion, but as its heart.

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